(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau

(43) International Publication Date
29 April 2004 (29.04.2004)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2004/036748 A2

(51) International Patent Classification[7]: H03K

(21) International Application Number:
PCT/IB2003/004216

(22) International Filing Date:
19 September 2003 (19.09.2003)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
02079358.4 21 October 2002 (21.10.2002) EP

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(81) Designated States *(national)*: AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States *(regional)*: ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, RO,

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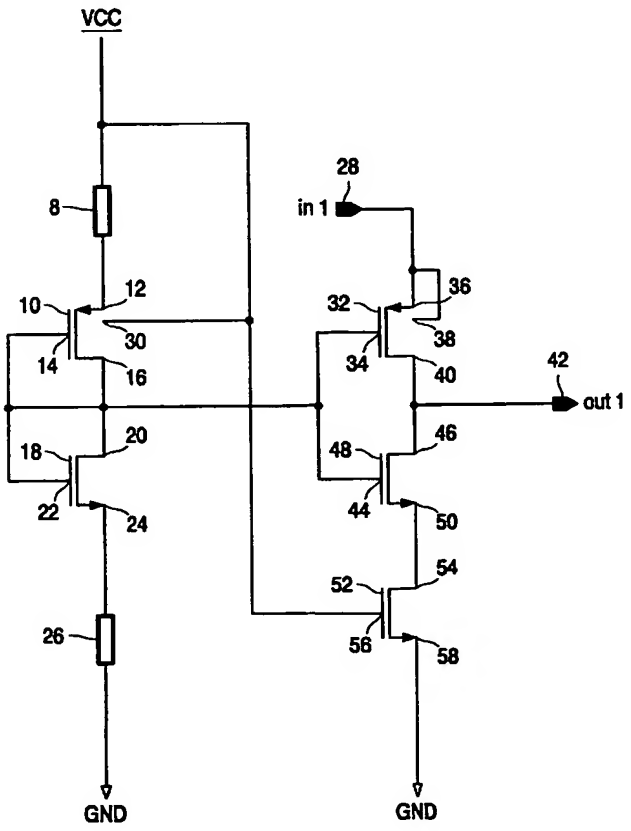
(54) Title: FAIL-SAFE METHOD AND CIRCUIT



(57) Abstract: A method and a circuit for producing a fail-safe output signal in case of an open circuit condition of an input pad of a digital circuit unit, comprising a first inverter stage (10, 18) providing a constant switch level; a second inverter stage (32, 44) providing a variable switch level that depends of the signal level of the input pad (28) and comparing the constant switch level of the first inverter stage (10, 18) with the variable switch level of the second stage (32, 44) and providing an output signal at an output terminal (42) thereof if the variable switch level of the second stage (32, 44) is greater than the constant switch level; and an additional circuit element (52) connected in series with the second inverter (32, 44) for decreasing the switch level of the second inverter stage (32, 44).

WO 2004/036748 A2